

and hired a small hovel which stood at the foot of a hill adjoining the common. Here he lived, penuriously indeed, but contentedly; thankful that he could procure for his mother even this shed.

10. The poor woman, smitten by misfortune and borne down by advancing years, was incapable of doing any thing for herself, and Ralph not only had to support but to nurse her. He often found this task very difficult: but in proportion to his necessities, he increased his exertions; and Heaven, which rewards filial piety and industry, gave a blessing to all his efforts. He was enabled to pay the rent of his cottage, and to discharge some of the debts his father had left; which being due to some of the poorest of the cottagers, they were ill able to lose. For this he was obliged to toil very hard, and almost to starve himself; but he cheerfully endured all privations whilst he saw his mother surrounded by a few comforts, and felt that he was discharging an important duty.

11. One evening he was sitting reading to his aged parent, when he heard the rattling of the wheels of a carriage. Such a sound was so unusual in that spot, that, after expressing his surprise at it, he arose to see whither it was going. It stopped at the cottage, and from it alighted a man about thirty years of age. Ralph made a respectful bow, and asked, whom he was pleased to want? "Yourself," replied the stranger with much affability, "if, as I suppose, you are Ralph Martin." Ralph said that he was. "And do you indeed not recollect me?" asked the stranger.

12. "Do you not remember the poor sailor-boy whom you sheltered and relieved? I am he; and if you will give me another night's lodging and a slice of bacon, I will stay with you, and give you an account of the circumstances which have wrought such a change in my appearance." Ralph, who in the change which more than sixteen years had made, no longer recognized his shipwrecked acquaintance, was, however, extremely glad to see him in so much